

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge
2700 Suwannee Canal Road
Folkston, GA 31537
Phone: (912) 496-7366 ext. 233
Fax: (912) 496-7991
<http://www.fws.gov/okefenokee>

News Release



For Immediate Release

Contact: Art Webster

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Solar Project Energizes Refuge Earth Day Celebration

As Refuge staff and volunteers gear up for this year's Earth Day and 75th Anniversary Celebration at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, anticipation is in the air. The Refuge has been putting together family-friendly activities to highlight Earth Day for years, but this time around, things will be a little different ... and a little more exciting with the theme—"Mobilize the Earth, Connecting the Past to the Future"

The Okefenokee Wildlife League (OWL) is sponsoring the Solar Car Sprint, a science-based competition, where homeschoolers and students from Bethune Middle School, exhibit and race model cars powered entirely by solar energy. According to OWL board member and Sprint Coordinator Sally Webb, "This competition is an amazing opportunity for Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge to reach students in our own backyard. It's allowed us to foster an environment where these students can safely experiment with alternative energy sources and learn firsthand the benefits of solar energy and its potential to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels."

A project of this magnitude requires community involvement on many different levels. Waste Management Chesser Island Road Landfill has been a generous supporter of the project. The company's interest in this community project involving local students and alternative energy stems from their own endeavors to harness the renewable energy produced by landfill-gas. According to Amy Boyson, Community Affairs Manager at Waste Management, "The Solar Car Sprint aligns with our company's environmental initiatives. We are proud to be a partner with Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge and the Okefenokee Wildlife League to help educate the youth in Charlton County about solar energy."

In addition to the Solar Car Sprint, the refuge will host a number of other activities for youth and their families such as face painting , live animal shows, outdoor theater, and an a chance to complete a Recreational Opportunities Passport.

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge will host the celebration on Saturday, April 21, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. inside the East Entrance, located 7 miles southwest of Folkston, GA off the Okefenokee Parkway South (GA 121/23). For those without Annual, Senior, or Access Passes, a fee of \$5.00 per vehicle will be charged to enter the refuge for this event. For additional information, call (912) 496-7836 or visit www.fws.gov/okefenokee. The Earth Day Celebration is subject to cancellation in the event of inclement weather.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is committed to providing access to our events for all participants. Persons needing reasonable accommodations in order to attend and participate in our events should contact Art Webster at (912) 496-7366 ext. 233 or arthur_webster@fws.gov. In order to allow sufficient time to process requests, please contact us for assistance by close of business at least five business days in advance of the event.